

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM**

**Iroquois School District
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2003-2004**

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Date of Report: November 2, 2003

This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by the Office of Special Education. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

Promising Practice	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
Meets Requirements	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
Needs Improvement	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
Out of Compliance	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
Not applicable	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

Principle 1 – General Supervision
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General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive Plan
- Table A
- Table D
- Table C
- Parent surveys
- Teacher surveys

Meets requirements

The steering committee determined that the district follows the comprehensive plan to effectively implement ongoing child find to locate, identify and evaluate children with disabilities, ages birth through 21 years who may need special education. The comprehensive plan meets the state/federal requirements and the district has no students placed out of district.

Data acquired from the past three years shows that the district is reviewing and analyzing our progress towards state performance goals and indicators.

Currently all personnel are fully certified and meet highly qualified regulations.

Validation Results**Promising practice**

Through interview and observation the review team found the Iroquois School District has a preschool which is free to all students in the district. It is located in the elementary wing of the school.

The Iroquois District has a Teachers Assistance Team, which meets to help students who are struggling in a specific area. The team meets and gives the teacher ideas on modifications to help the student succeed. There is a follow up with the team to monitor students.

Meets requirements

The review team agrees with all areas identified by the steering committee as meeting requirements for general supervision.

The review team observed special needs pre-school student in the pre-school classroom with his/her peers. The student is included in all regular education activities. The review team observed two other students on IEPs in the regular education classroom with peers. Both students were interacting with their peers and working on class projects.

Out of compliance**ARSD 24:05:16:16.01. Paraprofessionals and assistants**

Paraprofessionals and assistants who are appropriately trained and supervised in accordance with this section may be used to assist in the provision of special education and related services to children with disabilities under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Act. At a minimum, the following standards must be met:

- (1) Paraprofessionals must have a high school diploma or GED;
- (2) Paraprofessionals must work within defined roles and responsibilities as identified by the school district;
- (3) Paraprofessionals must work under the supervision of, and be evaluated by, certified staff

Through interviews with administrators, teachers and paraprofessionals, the review team found the district has not consistently trained paraprofessionals who are working with special needs students.

Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3rd birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Surveys
- Table 1

Meets requirements

The steering committee determined through data collected, that the district does provide a free appropriate public education.

No suspension/expulsion for more than 10 days for students with disabilities has occurred.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The review team agrees with all areas identified by the steering committee as meeting the requirements in the area of free appropriate public education.

Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Surveys
- File reviews
- Comprehensive plan

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded that 14 of 14 files reviewed used valid tests.

In 14 of 14 files reviewed written consent was given before testing.

All evaluation or reevaluation procedures and instruments are reviewed and upgraded to meet minimum state and federal requirements. All students are reevaluated with valid evaluation materials and by qualified personnel.

The data gathered from student file reviews and surveys determined that the IEP team considers evaluation or IEE findings to determine the category of disability.

Parents surveyed showed that 15 of 15 parents received a copy of the IEP with eligibility documentation.

Needs improvement

The steering committee concluded that 5 out of 14 files did not document parent input into the evaluation. The district has started documenting parent consent into the evaluation process.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The review team agrees with all areas identified by the steering committee as meeting the requirements in the area of appropriate evaluations.

Needs improvement

The review team agrees with the areas identified by the steering committee as needing improvement.

Out of compliance

ARSD 24:05:25:04, Evaluation procedures

School districts shall ensure, at a minimum, a child is assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability and those evaluation procedures include a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional and developmental information about the child. There was no evidence of functional assessment into the evaluation process in a review of eight out of fifteen files.

ARSD 24:05:25:06. Revaluations

Revaluations shall be conducted at least every three years or if conditions warrant or if the child's parent or teacher requests an evaluation. Revaluations must be completed within 25 school days after receipt by the district of signed consent to reevaluate unless other time limits are agreed to by the school administration and the parents. Four out of fifteen files did not meet the 25 day timeline.

Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

Comprehensive Plan

Table L

Table M

Meets requirements

The steering committee determined that all parent surveys and student file reviews show that parents are informed of their parental rights.

The comprehensive plan addresses all rights of a child when no parent can be identified.

The files reviewed determined that consent is sought for all activities.
The district follows the comprehensive plan for inspection and review of all educational records.

The district follows all corrective action set by the Special Education Programs Office to ensure compliance. The district has not had a request for a due process hearing within the past 3 years. Due process hearing procedures are specified in the district comprehensive plan.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The review team validated the results of the self-assessment and concurred that all areas under procedural safeguards are meeting requirements.

Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Surveys
- File reviews
- Comprehensive Plan

Meets requirements

The steering committee determined that the student file reviews document that appropriate team membership is obtained and responsibilities identified.

Student surveys, parent surveys, teacher surveys and student file reviews indicate that the district does ensure the IEP contains all required content. Documentation provides clear evidence that the district does have policies and procedures in place to develop appropriate IEPs.

Needs Improvement

The parental prior notice does not include information that parents may invite others to the meeting. That is contained in parent rights.

File reviews indicate that transition plans are developed, but due to the low number of students who transition age, it is believed that more training is necessary.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The review team validates the area of appropriate team membership as concluded by the steering committee for meets requirements.

Needs improvement

The team could not validate areas of needs improvement by the steering committee.

Out of compliance

ARSD 24:05:27:01.03 Content of individualized education program

A statement of measurable annual goals, including benchmarks or short-term objectives, related to:

- (a) Meeting the student's needs that result from the student's disability to enable the student to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum; and
- (2) Meeting each of the student's other educational needs that result from the student's disability.

In seven files reviewed the student's annual goals were not consistently written as measurable, and did not list the condition. For example, "___ will increase positive communication and self-expression as necessary to improve communication skills." "___ will increase reading comprehension skills as necessary to complete classroom assignments and gain knowledge from reading."

ARSD 24:05:28:02 Continuum of alternative placements

The IEP team must address the justification for placement through a statement in the IEP. This statement must include an explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will not participate with non-disabled children in the general classroom and in extracurricular and non-academic activities. Eleven out of fifteen justification statements did not address the required content. For example, "The placement committee selects general classroom with modifications as the best placement for ___. The other placements are more restrictive and not in ___ best interest." "General classroom with modifications was reviewed and rejected. ___ requires specialized instruction using an alternative curriculum in math, reading, and language arts. The resource room placement was accepted as this best meets ___ needs. All other placements are more restrictive and not in ___ best interest."

ARSD 24:05:27:01:02. Development, review and revision of individualized education program.

In reviewing and revising each student's individualized education program, the team shall consider, in the case of a student whose behavior impedes his or her learning or that of others, strategies, including positive behavioral interventions, and supports to address that behavior.

In three files reviewed, the students were identified under the disability category of Other Health Impaired. The students all demonstrated attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder, however; these behaviors were never addressed in the initial IEP. There were no behaviors listed in the present levels of performance, goals, or objectives. The area of consideration of special factors did not address that the student's general classroom behaviors impede their learning. During interviews with staff, they stated different strategies that are used with these students to facilitate their learning. The documentation of these strategies were not in the IEP.

24:05:27:13:02 Transition services

Transition services are a coordinated set of activities for a student designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of activities shall be based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and shall include instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

The review team determined that transition did not contain the life planning outcomes regarding employment and living. One hundred percent of the outcomes were based on what the student is doing at the present time, not the future. For example, in the area of employment, "I clean barns, work the tent sale and operate a four wheeler." "Mow the lawn and do chores around the house". "I worked at a diesel repair shop for the summer." In the area of independent living, "Can cook macaroni, pizza and cereal." "Cooks using microwave, and is able to spend money." "Working on money management and has done

some meal preparation. Can operate a vacuum cleaner, but doesn't like to." Four out of six transition files did not have a complete course of study for all grades. Electives were listed, and one-ninth grader had a course of study for ninth grade. Tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades were left blank. The district did not provide a course of study and/or a coordinated set of activities, which would promote movement from school to post-school activities.

Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- File reviews
- Surveys
- Inservice training.

Meets requirements

The least restrictive environment is addressed at every IEP meeting and children are placed according to what they need for successful participation.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The review team agrees with all areas for meets requirements for least restrictive environment as concluded by the steering committee.